Flipped Learning is the brainchild of educators Jon Bergmann and Aaron Sams. In 2007, Bergmann and Sams had a discussion about the frustration they were feeling about their students’ poor performance in science. Through that conversation, they concluded that students would find much more success if they had their teachers present to answer questions and clarification when they got stuck on an assignment. They don’t really need their teachers present in order to listen to a lecture, watch a video, or review content. So began the flipped classroom. Bergmann and Sams began to record their lectures for students to listen to as homework. Then, students would complete assignments, labs, and tests in class with their teacher there to help them along the way.

They found great success with this strategy and in 2012, these two pioneers co-authored the bestselling book [***Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day***](http://www.iste.org/store/product.aspx?ID=2285)(ISTE/ASCD, 2012). The book explains the flipped learning philosophy and provides an overview of what the flipped and flipped mastery classrooms look like. The authors share insights into the logistics of conducting a flipped classroom, including equipment needed to create videos, what types of activities should take place during class, and how to formatively assess students. The book ends with Bergmann and Sams responses to Frequently Asked Questions on topics such as dealing with limited computer access, administrator buy-in, and making sure students access the required information outside of class.

Through social media and word of mouth, the flipped learning philosophy is reaching schools all over the country. As a result, Bergmann and Sams founded the Flipped Learning Network (FLN), with the mission” to provide educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources to successfully implement Flipped Learning” (<http://flippedlearning.org/>). Due to a growing number of misconceptions about what flipped learning is, the board members of FLN felt the need to come up with a clear, formal definition of flipped learning. They also wanted to distinguish between flipped learning and the flipped classroom. These two terms are not necessarily interchangeable because a flipped classroom may or may not lead to flipped learning.

**WHAT IS FLIPPED LEARNING?**

The FLN’s formal definition of flipped learning is ”a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter”. Many teachers flip their classroom by having their students read text or watch videos outside of class. However, in order for true flipped learning to occur, teachers must incorporate these *Four Pillars of F-L-I-P* into their instruction: (<http://fln.schoolwires.net/cms/lib07/VA01923112/Centricity/Domain/46/FLIP_handout_FNL_Web.pdf>)

**F—Flexible Environment**

“Flipped Learning allows for a variety of learning modes; educators often physically rearrange their learning spaces to accommodate a lesson or unit, to support either group work or independent study. They create flexible spaces in which students choose when and where they learn. Furthermore, educators who flip their classes are flexible in their expectations of student timelines for learning and in their assessments of student learning.”

**L—Learning Culture**

“In the traditional teacher-centered model, the teacher is the primary source of information. By contrast, the Flipped Learning model deliberately shifts instruction to a learner-centered approach, where in-class time is dedicated to exploring topics in greater depth and creating rich learning opportunities. As a result, students are actively involved in knowledge construction as they participate in and evaluate their learning in a manner that is personally meaningful.”

**I—Intentional Content**

“Flipped Learning Educators continually think about how they can use the Flipped Learning model to help students develop conceptual understanding, as well as procedural fluency. They determine what they need to teach and what materials students should explore on their own. Educators use Intentional Content to maximize classroom time in order to adopt methods of student-centered, active learning strategies, depending on grade level and subject matter.”

**P—Professional Educator**

“The role of a Professional Educator is even more important, and often more demanding, in a Flipped Classroom than in a traditional one. During class time, they continually observe their students, providing them with feedback relevant in the moment, and assessing their work. Professional Educators are reflective in their practice, connect with each other to improve their instruction, accept constructive criticism, and tolerate controlled chaos in their classrooms. While Professional Educators take on less visibly prominent roles in a flipped classroom, they remain the essential ingredient that enables Flipped Learning to occur.”

BENEFITS OF FLIPPED LEARNING

Many educators have found great success with flipped learning in their classrooms. Here are some of the benefits that educators, including Bergmann & Sams, have identified:

(<http://www.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/470781/uiconf_id/3676811/entry_id/1_omx1fx6i/embed/legacy>?)

* There is often a lot of content to cover and not a lot of time. Flipped learning (FL) allows the teacher to maximize face-to-face time with their students, so that they can be with students when they are struggling.
* FL allows for better differentiation. Teachers have more time to vary content, process, and product to meet all students’ individual needs.
* Students have ownership of their own learning.
* Students become better learners because they are taking ownership of their learning.
* Students do not pushback as often against “homework” and challenging assignments because the work is done in class where they feel supported (by the teacher and peers).
* There is less need for after-school tutoring due to increased one-on-one time in class.
* The classroom becomes much less abour the teacher telling the student everything and more collaborative in every way.

**OPPOSITION TO FLIPPED LEARNING**

The response to flipped learning has been overwhelmingly positive from both educators and parents. However, inevitably there are those who see flaws in this educational paradigm shift. These opponents have expressed the following:

* “ the flipped classroom doesn’t come close to preparing students for the challenges of today’s world and workforce.”

(<http://www.fastcoexist.com/1679807/why-flip-the-classroom-when-we-can-make-it-do-cartwheels>)

* “…anecdotal evidence suggests that flipping classrooms is a more popular practice in wealthier suburban communities where nearly all students have Internet access at home and schools are more likely to have computers in classrooms…flipped classrooms still rely heavily on lectures by teachers, which they argue are not as effective as hands-on learning. Still others worry that the new practice—so dependent on technology—could end up leaving low-income students behind and widening the achievement gap.”
* “Flipping does not solve all problems…Some students must still be constantly needled to do their work.”
* “Outside factors “have an impact on what these kids do just as much as the way content is delivered.”

(<http://hechingerreport.org/content/promise-of-the-flipped-classroom-eludes-poorer-school-districts_8748/>)

* “Technology plays a big part in a successful flipped learning experience… the digital divide as a strike against flipping.”
* “Many students need an incentive to watch videos at home just like they need to be motivated to read their textbooks and do their homework. Not all students are motivated to learn on their own. If students aren't prepared, it makes it much harder to have a successful in-class experience.”
* “Teachers need the knowledge and the time to create or provide focused videos. We kept ours to a maximum of five minutes each. Even with free online tools such as [screencast-o-matic](http://screencast-o-matic.com/) or[present.me](http://present.me/) to create the videos, it still takes time to get it right.”

(<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-frydenberg/the-flipped-classroom-its_b_2300988.html>)

**AN IDEA WHO’S TIME HAS COME**

Despite some of the challenges in implementing flipped learning in every classroom, even opponents agree that the concept has some great merits. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), a non-profit organization committed to supporting the use of information technology in K-12 education, is a huge advocate of flipped learning. According to the ISTE, “teaching to the new [common core] standards requires completely different teaching methodologies than teaching to the old standards”. They feel that flipped learning may be one such methodology. (<http://www.iste.org/explore/articledetail?articleid=3>)

As an instructional technology specialist, the school librarian has a role to play in this “flipped” world. At the 2013 ISTE conference, there were many resources presented school librarians can share with teachers to enhance their flipped classrooms as well as their own work with students in the library. One of the biggest takeaways was the importance of curation.  It was explained that “curation is defined not by what a library owns, but by what students need and use”. Panelists shared their favorite curation tools, including:

* <http://www.scoop.it/>
* <http://www.mentormob.com/>
* <http://www.pinterest.com/>
* <http://www.symbaloo.com/>
* <https://www.thinglink.com/>
* <https://educlipper.net> and
* EdCanvas <http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2013/08/edcanvas-for-schools-lets-you-manage.html#.U7TkypRdWuI>

Participants also shared how flipping instruction coupled with curating resources can allow school librarians, who don’t see students as often as classroom teachers, to maximize the time they spend working with students (see [curatedflipped.wikispaces.com](http://curatedflipped.wikispaces.com/)). Lastly, panelists discussed the importance of the school librarian’s role as a school leader and the dynamics of building a strong relationship between librarians and administrators. This is essential in order to “create a technology-rich learning culture built on trust”.

(<http://www.thedigitalshift.com/2013/06/k-12/flipped-classrooms-librarians-as-defenders-of-wisdom-and-the-hottest-tech-tools-iste-2013/>)